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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000525

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/26/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: OYO STATE FACES A SUMMER OF DISCONTENT

REF: LAGOS 388

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Classified By: Acting Consul General Donald McConnell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary: Poloff's visit to Oyo State showed Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala enjoying no political honeymoon following his election in the controversial April poll. The civil service is on strike and after an outburst of violence between strikers and transport workers loyal to Akala, attempts to broker a compromise have gone nowhere. The election tribunal has reconvened, but Akala now has a new police commissioner, and a series of unfavorable tribunal rulings have put more pressure on the Governor. The opposition appears confident, and the summer is proving to be a trying time for the Akala administration. End summary.

A Protracted Strike Greeted Akala

12. (C) Poloff visited Ibadan on June 27 and visited the office of the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) in Oyo. Oyo state civil service workers began their strike on June 23, a strike which included teachers and had ended all school exams. On Poloff's arrival strikers chanted anti-Akala slogans outside the NLC offices, and one striker handed Poloff a flyer which alleged the pay raises Akala had granted his inner circle upon his inauguration. Despite the slogans and Akala's claim the strike was politically motivated, Basiru Apapa, Chairman of the Oyo State NLC, said the government workers were on strike for strictly financial reasons and without political motivation.

13. (C) The civil service union demanded a restoration of the pay raise granted by Governor Rashidi Ladoja in April, which increased the monthly salary from 6500 naira/month to 9400 naira/month (from approximately \$50 to \$75). Apapa told Poloff that after Akala's inauguration the Governor invited

the union leaders to inform them he was rescinding the increase because the state treasury could not afford it. The NLC rejected Akala's financial figures since they conflicted with the estimates given in April, and Apapa said the government had already concluded negotiations and could not renege on its agreement, particularly since Akala was Deputy Governor when the government consented to the pay raise.

14. (C) According to Wale Ojo-Lanre, Oyo Chairman of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Oyo strongman and Akala patron Lamidi Adedibu encouraged the unions to strike against former Governor Rashidi Ladoja, who initially refused to raise civil service salaries but eventually relented. Ladoja publicly stated he did not want to cause problems for the incoming Governor.

NURTW Members Attack Strikers

15. (C) On June 26, while leaving the government house members of the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) brandished weapons and sent 35 strikers to the hospital with various wounds. The NURTW is widely considered allied to Lamidi Adedibu, the strongman of Oyo politics and Akala's patron. Apapa called for the removal of Oyo State police commissioner Jonathan Johnson, whom he termed a thug in collusion with Governor Akala.

16. (C) After the attack, the Special Security Service (SSS) called a meeting of the NURTW, police, and the strikers. Wale Ojo-Lanre, Oyo State Chairman of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, explained to Poloff the Oyo State NURTW had split into two factions. The pro-Adedibu faction led by Oyo NURTW Chairman Lateef Akinsola, a.k.a Tokyo, had clashed with the NURTW faction installed by Ladoja and led by Abubakar

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Wasiu, a.k.a Tawa. Tokyo had been previously convicted for the murder of a union rival but was released in 2006 during Akala's 11-month tenure as Governor. Subsequently, Tokyo reclaimed control of the NURTW and even kidnapped Tawa at one point. This internecine infighting between the warring Tokyo and Tawa factions mirrored the state conflict and accounted for much of the violence in the state, Ojo-Lanre said.

17. (C) The police ostensibly were responsible for maintaining order and arresting those responsible, Ojo-Lanre said, but Adedibu had a 60-policeman detachment assigned to protect him. Police Commissioner Johnson had been an Adedibu supporter and during the past two years of political violence in the state made little effort to arrest the real perpetrators, Ojo-Lanre said. Johnson's implausible allegation that the strikers instigated the battle with NURTW workers did prompt a reaction. In early July, newly-appointed Inspector General of Police Michael Okiro requested permission from Yar'Adua to reshuffle the state police commissioners. Permission granted by the President, Okiro spent little time shunting Johnson off to the Enugu Police College and installing Udom Ekpoudom, the former Delta State Commissioner of Police, as his replacement in Oyo State.

Election Tribunal Looming for Akala

18. (C) For its protection, the election tribunal reconvened on July 3 in a military barracks, and Poloff spoke with All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) gubernatorial candidate Abiola Ajimobi about his tribunal case. Ajimobi recently dispatched his tribunal team to the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) office in Ibadan to inspect election materials, which he believed INEC had manipulated. Ajimobi told Poloff he had instructed his team to look carefully at the results in Ogbomosho, Akala's hometown, which had only 5

of the 20 Oyo Local Government Councils but accounted for half of Akala's votes. Ajimobi told Poloff his team would check the forms completed by presiding officers and records, and verify the endorsements on the back of the ballots. His team also planned to present a bevy of witnesses including the paramount ruler of Ogbomosho, Ajimobi said.

¶9. (C) Ajimobi wanted to examine the ballot papers, because he alleged officials had in recent days been thumb printing ballots so as to account for Akala's votes. His team would also compare the voters' register with the actual vote, particularly in the disputed Ogbomosho region, where votes were claimed in student wards despite the fact that the universities had been closed and students absent, Ajimobi charged. Ajimobi acknowledged that it was very expensive to contest before the tribunal, but remained determined to do so. The problem, Ajimobi said, was the tribunals lacked the technology to quickly prove the fraud. The tribunal needs scanning machines to verify multiple voting as well as a handwriting expert to check for forgeries, Ajimobi said.

¶10. (C) Nonetheless, Ajimobi considered his chances for victory at the tribunal very good. Recently, Akala suffered a setback when the Election Tribunal decided to admit as evidence the white paper indictment against him issued by the Ladoja-constituted administrative panel. Ajimobi said that the national People's Democratic Party (PDP) was trying to negotiate a face-saving compromise by asking him to cooperate with a unity government, but he maintained he would neither give up his mandate nor would he speak with Akala. Prince Adesiyun, a traditional ruler in Oyo, believes that despite his protestations, Ajimobi was currently negotiating an agreement with Adedibu.

Comment

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¶11. (C) With a highly-anticipated electoral tribunal, Oyo remains an important state to watch to see if the tribunals will restore some faith in the electoral process. Following the disputed elections, Akala will not be granted a political honeymoon from an opposition certain he had robbed them of victory and a civil service determined to press the embattled governor. Similar labor disputes have occurred throughout the Southwest, although Oyo's strike has been the most protracted. While it is still too early to make a definitive prediction, the replacement of the pro-Adedibu police commissioner could indicate a readiness by the federal government to begin to curb political violence in the state. But Oyo is in Obasanjo's backyard, and the former President has long supported Adedibu, so until further notice, Adedibu's violent brand of power politics will continue to dominate the state.

MCCONNELL